

# General Operating Procedures

## High Tides Swim Club



### GENERAL OPERATING PROCEDURES

High Tides Swim Club (HTSC) offers two swimming seasons per year, which align with USA Swimming championships and Minnesota Swimming championships.

- **Short Course season:** Fall-Winter Season is mid-September through late February (or early March).
- **Long Course Season:** Spring-Summer Season is mid-April through late July (or early August). The practice schedule and meet schedule for each season can be found on the team website.

### REGISTRATION

All HTSC swimmers must be registered with High Tides Swim Club. The registration process is available online on the [team website](#). By USA Swimming rule, all swimmers must be registered as Athlete Members of USA Swimming. The fee associated with online registration pays the USA Swimming Athlete Membership fee (none of this fee goes to HTSC). Registration fees vary based on season and practice groups. All members must register online and follow the [HTSC Billing Policy](#). During the registration process, all members must read and agree to the HTSC Code of Conduct, Parent Code of Conduct, Medical Release Waiver, Liability Waiver and Swim Meet Volunteer Commitment. These policies are also posted on the club's website for member's reference.

### SWIMMER MEDICAL CONDITIONS

If a swimmer has a medical condition (physical or behavioral) which could result in coach care during an athletic activity, it is the parent(s) responsibility to set up a meeting with the swimmer's primary coach to educate the coach on the condition, symptoms and necessary actions. During the online registration process, parents should fill in the appropriate information in the "Medical Information" section of the online form.

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### CONDUCT OF SWIM PRACTICE

Swimmers should be on the pool deck, dressed and ready to get in the water 10 minutes before practice begins. Coaches will start organizing swimmers, giving instructions and generally preparing the group for practice before they get into the water and thus, if swimmers are late they may miss important information.

Swimmers are expected to give complete attention to their coaches at all times. They should refrain from excessive talking so that they and their teammates are able to hear the coaches and follow instruction. Swimmers should use care with all equipment. As in school, proper behavior is expected. Unruly conduct will result in disciplinary action. Parents should keep in mind that practice is for the swimmers and not a time to resolve issues with the coaches. Parents should contact the coach before or after swim practices.

### PRACTICE SCHEDULE

The seasonal practice schedules are posted on the [team website](#). Note that some groups may begin practicing (and finish practicing) on different dates from other groups, based upon age, ability level, meet schedule and/or pool availability. Swimmers may not practice with a group other than their own. Training group schedules, particularly in relation to group size/lane space, age and ability do not have the flexibility to accommodate swimmers from other groups. Exceptions to swim with another group may only be granted by the Head Coach, and only then for athletic reasons deemed necessary (vice personal schedule challenges).

Variances from the normal practice schedule will be posted on the Monthly Calendars, which are posted on the team website. The Monthly Calendar will also contain important information about special events. The Monthly Calendar is an important day-by-day accounting of team activity. The weekly newsletter will also have details about important upcoming events. The monthly calendars are available to subscribe to stay updated on practice group times.

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### **FACILITY USE GUIDELINES**

Sports drinks or water (best!) are encouraged to bring on deck and use throughout practice. Closed containers for drinks are required at all facilities. No glass of any kind is permitted at any facility. All swimmers, parents, family and friends must adhere to all facility use policies. Team Swimmers will be expected to pick up all trash and all swim gear, clearing the deck of all objects, before departing practice. In cases where lanelines or other swim training equipment must be stowed, swimmers will jointly participate in stowing such gear or help as directed by the coaches.

Parents, family members, friends and other spectators are not permitted on deck (USA Swimming Rules). The deck is defined as all space from the edge of the pool itself to the nearest wall or fence. All practices and meets are encouraged to be viewed from the assigned spectator areas, bleachers, viewing windows, etc. Parents are asked to refrain from signaling, verbalizing or otherwise attempting to capture the attention of their child during the conduct of practice or during a swim meet when the coach is working with the swimmer.

### **INCLEMENT WEATHER**

If a cancelation/modification of practice occurs due to inclement weather, three methods of communication will be utilized: website news announcement, email and text message. The decision to cancel/modify a practice rests with the coaching staff. Whenever possible, that decision will be made at least two hours in advance of a practice. Parents are strongly encouraged to enter an SMS (cell phone) number into both their account AND the swimmer account so that any text message announcements are received. During periods of inclement weather, it is advisable to frequently check the website, email and cell phone for announcements. Please note that coaches will not be expected to respond to proactive questions/communications regarding weather cancelations; rather, families are encouraged to keep watching the website news, email and cell phone.

Summer storms affecting outdoor practices and/or meets are an exception to advanced notice – those cancelations/modifications may occur on the spot, with little or no notice. A storm could pass through and a few minutes later, swimming may be possible. During summer days of potential weather, families are encouraged to closely watch the website, email and cell phone for notifications.

Team Policy: Practices and meets may continue in the rain or cold, but not during lightning. Lightning will result in a delay or cancelation.

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### **ATTENDANCE**

Most groups do not have attendance requirements; however, the coaches may suggest the number of recommended practices each group. Practice is the building block to success. Success will not come without dedication and dedication starts with regular practice attendance. For swimmers to progress from one level to the next a commitment to practice schedules must be met. Swimmers seeking to advance to performance groups with attendance requirements will be evaluated on past attendance in their previous seasons, with their current group, as actual history of participation is the greatest predictor of future commitment.

### **TARDINESS**

HTSC expects all swimmers to be on time, which means arriving on deck 10 minutes before the swim activity begins, to maximize the actual swim time allotted. Swimmers who are continuously late not only distract the coach and group, but are also being disrespectful by virtue of not prioritizing timeliness. Continuously late swimmers will be addressed with a notification and/or meeting with their group coach, parents and Head Coach to discuss remedies.

### **LATE PARENT PICK-UP**

At HTSC the safety of your child is our primary concern. This includes in the water and out of the water. Late pickups create potential unsupervised situation and put children and the integrity of the program at greater risk.

Chronic late pick-ups will be up for review by the board of directors. Please be considerate of our staff in following the program times. If a parent or authorized adult will be late, it is their responsibility to notify the lead coach as soon as possible. We understand that emergencies arise. When your child is picked up late, our coaches are required to remain working, therefore, unable to attend to commitments outside of the pool.

Parents should plan to be at practice before the end of the practice. Swimmers will be expected to be out of the locker rooms within 15 minutes of dismissal from practice.

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### TIME STANDARDS

USA Swimming and Minnesota Swimming have time standards by which to categorize the performance of athletes. USA Swimming has six-time standard levels: “B”, “BB”, “A”, “AA”, “AAA”, “AAAA”. Minnesota Swimming adds “C” and “Champ” standards to this list. Some meets have time standards to enter, some do not. Championship meets always have a time standard for entry. The Minnesota “Champ” time standard is utilized to qualify for the State Meet. The USA Swimming “AAA” time standard is used to qualify for the Central Zone Meet (the next level above State Meet).

Special national, sectional or regional meets will have special time standards, not associated with the time standard progressions listed above. Special standards for national, sectional or regional meets are set separately so that clubs from anywhere in the country can readily identify the standard.

### REGULAR SEASON SWIM MEETS

Coaches will recommend meets that swimmers in their group should attend. These meets are for the benefit of the group and the individual swimmer, and are important to maintain team unity and spirit, which enhances the competition skills of each swimmer. The best way for a swimmer to evaluate themselves and their progress is through meet participation. If signed up for a meet, the swimmer must pay a fee for each event he/she wants to swim, or a flat fee, depending upon the meet. Costs are detailed in the meet information, which is linked from the event page on our website. Once an entry is confirmed and the deadline has passed, fees are not refundable.

### SWIM MEET SIGN-UP PROCEDURE

Sign-ups for swim meets are done online on our team website under “Meets/Events”. Some meets will have the option to make individual event requests, others will simply be “Yes/No”. Regardless of the event sign-up methodology, coaches have the final decision regarding all events/entries. The same applies to Open Lane Swims, Time Trials and Swim-Offs – coaches have the final decision regarding these events as well. Swimmers who do not indicate any limits to their availability will be entered in the maximum number of days (as qualified) for a particular meet. If the swimmer is not available for a given day, parents must indicate as such in the “Notes” section of the entry commitment panel. All swimmers who are entered on a particular day will be automatically considered eligible and/or selected for relays on that day. Some meets will offer Open Lane Swims and/or Time Trials. It is up to the Lead Coach of each

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group to suggest/offer these special swims to the swimmers. It is not always athletically favorable for swimmers to add more events via Open Lane Swims or Time Trials.

### CHAMPIONSHIP MEETS

By definition, championship meets are those meets which culminate a season. Swimmers at all training levels of the team are expected to compete in the highest level achieved championship meet determined by the coaching staff. A few championship meets may occur during a season, but most occur at the end of the season. The three levels of championship meets offered in Minnesota are the Minnesota Achievement Championships ("C" or "B/C" level, depending on the season), Minnesota Regional Championships ("B"/"BB"/"A", or just "BB"/"A", depending on the season) and the State Championships ("Champ" times and faster). Coaches will inform swimmers if they should consider multiple championship meets, if their qualification level spans several championships.

The goal of HTSC is to score as many points as possible, having the greatest possible team and individual success at all championship meets. The coaches will determine what events (individual and relay) the swimmer will swim. For Prelim-Final format championships, the team expects that anyone who qualifies for consolations or finals will swim as qualified – there will be no scratching without coach permission. If a swimmer is permitted to scratch, the coach will inform the swimmer of proper scratch procedure.

The coaches will enter as many relays as possible at the championship meets. Relays score double the points of individual swims. While a swimmer may not possess the required time standard to swim individual events on a given day of a championship meet, the swimmer may still be placed on a relay. Swimmers are reminded to double-check relay assignments and ensure their presence for the relays. Times can change during the course of the championship meet; swimmers can be added or removed at coach's discretion. Swimmers will be made aware of this policy leading into championship season. Relays are built using the best times during the course of the current season. There will be times that coaches make a decision to add a swimmer to a relay that has a slower time than others. This happens because swimmers did not swim a tapered race in the event for the relay while others were given the chance. (Example: A swimmer who swam at MRC's tapered bypassed a swimmer who was already qualified for a full slate of events at State Championships.) This will be a coach's decision.

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### MEET GUIDELINES

Just like practice, swimmers are expected to be on deck and ready to swim at least 10 minutes prior to the start of the scheduled warm-up period. Warm-up periods and session timelines will be posted on the team website in advance of the meet. Not only does timeliness result in a proper warm-up, the coaches need to take attendance, submit relay cards and account for all swimmers. Timeliness is very important for a successful meet. Swimmers may be removed from relays due to tardiness.

Swimmers must talk to their coach before and after each race. This is one of the most important ways a swimmer will learn to compete and rely on the professional expertise of the coach. The check-in with the coach also ensures that the swimmer does not miss a race. Parents are asked to help in reminding swimmers about checking in with the coach. All team members are encouraged to cheer for every member of the team. Cheering helps everyone enjoy the meet and teaches swimmers the importance of team spirit and comradeship. This is an important life lesson about supporting others.

Regardless of weather or indoor structure, swimmers should wear warm clothing, shoes and bring plenty of spare towels and dry clothing. Every swimmer should have some type of swim bag with a routine stowage of proper gear. Routines are important to avoid forgetting items. Swimmers will be in contact with many different environments during a meet – warm clothing will help protect them from the ill effects of moving between the pool and non-pool spaces. Shoes (or quality sandals with non-skid soles) are important to avoid falls. Proper nutrition and hydration are also key components to support the swimmer.

### UNCONDITIONALLY SUPPORTING THE SWIMMER

Regardless of their place in a particular event, or if they get their best time, swimmers need the same encouragement, support and approval from parents to demonstrate to the unconditional love that already exists in the family relationship. Showing disappointment in a swimmer's performance, as with any youth sporting event, only further raises the stakes for what should be a process-driven (rather than outcome-driven) experience. Youth athletes will go up and down with their performances, with many variables in play for each meet. This is not professional sports – these are children, developing life skills, learning how to face adversity and overcome obstacles in a physically tough, publicly timed, publicly-viewed arena. Parents can help bolster confidence and positive growth by having the same reaction to a great race/meet as the not-so-great race/meet. The coaches will take care of the teaching and accountability if the swimmer needs correction, as well as the praise and reinforcement when the swimmer demonstrates great skill.